



Philosophical Transactions

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In Water 100 Fathoms deep, will go down to the Bottom, and the Trunk will return in one Minute and three Seconds.

VIII. *A Letter from Mr. J. Breintal to Mr. Peter Collinson, F. R. S. containing an Account of what he felt after being bit by a Rattle-Snake.*

Philadelphia, Feb. 10. 1746.

Read April 10. 1746. I AM much obliged to you for your kind Letter; but you injoin me a sad Task. You must know then, that, on the 2d of last *May* in the Afternoon, I took a Turn down to the River; and meeting there some Company, we tarried about two Hours.

I hearing a Bell upon the Top of a steep Hill, which I knew to be the Cows of the People where I then quarter'd, and thinking to drive them home, it being almost in a strait Line thither, went right up the Hill; and as it was stony, sometimes I was ready to fall, so saved myself by my Hands, and got safe very near the Top; where either my Foot slipt, or the Stone under it gave Way, and brought me down upon my Knees. I laid my Hand on a broad Stone to stay myself; and, I suppose, the Snake lay on the opposite Side, and might be offended by some Motion of the Stone, so bit my Hand in an Instant, without any Warning or Sight; then slid under the Stones, and founded his Rattles.

I felt a Sort of Chilnefs when I heard the Sound ; because I had a constant Thought, that if ever I was bit, my Life was at an End. Without Stop I tore up the Stones, refolving to flay my Murderer : At laft I found him, cruſh'd his Head to Pieces with a Stone, took him up in my left Hand, and ran to my Quarters, ſucking the Wound on my right Hand as I went, and ſpitting out the Poiſon.

This kept it eaſy ; but my Tongue and my Lips became ſtiff and numb, as if they had been froze : So getting quickly home — “ I am bit with a Rattle-ſnake, and there lies my Murderer ! ” caſting him down on the Threshold.

All Hands were aloft in a Minute ; ſome for one Thing, ſome another, as they had ſeen or known in the like Affair ; and none ſeem'd leſs concern'd than myſelf, as I thought by their Actions.

The firſt Thing applied was a Fowl ; his Belly ript up, and put on my Hand alive, like a Gantlet, and there tied faſt. This drew out ſome of the Poiſon ; for immediately he ſwell'd, grew black, and ſunk.

I kept my Elbow bent, and my Fingers up, to keep the Poiſon from my Arm. — Thus I walked about, and ſet ſome of the Company to make a Fire on the Green ; for, as it fell out, there were 7 or 8 People there more than our Family. It was done quickly, and there we burnt the Snake.

Another Hand this while had got ſome Turmeric. This we bruifed well, Tops and Roots ; ſo made a Plaifter, and bound it round my Arm, to keep the Poiſon in the Hand : But Night came on, or elſe, I believe, it had never gone further than the Hand ; for this kept the Arm ſecure, till Midnight, or paſt.
Nor

Nor all this while had I much Pain: My Hand grew cold and numb, but did not swell very much; but now puffed up on a sudden, and grew furious; so I slit my Fingers with a Razor, and this gave some Ease. I also slit my Hand on the Back, and cupped it, and drew out a Quart or more of ugly poisonous slimy Stuff. But my Arm swelled for all we could do: Then I got it tied so fast, that all Communication might be stopped with the Body, that it seem'd almost void of Feeling; yet would it work, jump, writhe and twist like a Snake in the Skin, and change Colours, and be spotted; and they would move to and fro upon the Arm, which grew painful in the Bone.

Thus was it ty'd two Days, and all Things applied that could be got or thought on. At last, the Ashes of white Ash-Bark, and Vinegar, made into a Plaster, and laid to the Bite, drew out the Poison apace.

My Tongue and Lips swelled that Night, but were not very painful, occasion'd only, I suppose, by sucking the Wound. The Swelling of my Arm being sunk, till it was at least half gone, we then untied it; but, in two Hours, all my right Side was turned black, yet swell'd but little; nor was there any Pain went along with that Change of Colour. I bled at the Mouth soon after, and so continued spitting Blood and feverish four Days.

The Pain raged still in the Arm, and the Fever more violent; and by turns I was delirious for an Hour or two. This happen'd 3 or 4 times; and, 9 Days being over, the Fever abated, and I began to mend; but my Hand and Arm were spotted like a Snake, and continued so all Summer.

In

In the *Fall* my Arm swell'd, gather'd, and burst ;
so away went the Poison, Spots and all ; Heaven be
thanked for ridding me from such a cursed Adversary !

But the most surprising and tormenting were my
Dreams ; for, in all Sicknesses before, if I could but
sleep and dream, I was happy so long ; being ever in
some pleasing Scenes of Heaven, Earth, or Air : On
the contrary, now if I slept, so sure I dreamed of
horrid Places, on Earth only ; and very often rolling
among old Logs. Sometimes I was a white Oak
cut in Pieces ; and frequently my Feet would be
growing into two Hickerics. This cast a sort of Damp
upon my waking Thoughts, to find my sleeping Hours
disturbed with the Operation of that horrid Poison.

Thus have I sent you a Narrative of what happened
on the fatal Bite, without any Polish, with a Design
only to be understood by you.

IX. *A Letter from R. Badcock, Esq; to Mr.
Henry Baker, F. R. S. containing some Mi-
croscopical Observations on the Farina fœcun-
dans of the Holyoak and the Passion-Flower.*

S I R, Kensington, Nov. 6. 1745.

Read April 10.
1746.

A Few Days ago I return'd from *Rich-
mond*; and, looking on the *Adver-
tiser*, saw a Book publish'd by Mr. *Needham* *, Part
of which contain'd Observations on the *Farina fœ-
cundans*. As I before had (while at *Richmond*) made
some myself, I immediately examin'd the Book, and
find

* New *Microscopical Discoveries*, &c. Lond. 1745. 8o.